New York Giants In the National League And Cleveland Naps In the American Look Like Two Best Bets for Pennants

THE games are on, the season here! The stricken ball cuts through the air. The batters fan the atmosphere. The runners round the bases tear. The umpire calls the strikes and balls, puts runners out when they are in, nor heeds the rooters' angry squalls that they will kill him, sure as sin! The season's here, the same old muss, and on the seats the same old us.

The main question among the baseball fans of the country at present is what teams will capture the pennants in the National and American leagues. Can Frank Chance, leader of the Chicago Nationals, twice world's champions and three time pennant winners, capthe flag for the fourth time? Will McGraw of the New York Giants, with his greatly strengthened team, take the title away from the Cubs? Is this Philadelphia's year, or will Fred Clarke's perennial pennant pursuers, the Pittsburg Pirates, cop it? Is Hugh Jennings of Detroit going to win another banner? Can Lajoie of Cleveland, after many unsuccessful attempts, finally land the much coveted banner?

The person who tries to guess six months ahead what teams will win either the National or American league pennant is, as a general rule, wasting time. In most cases some contingency comes into a pennant race and upsets at least some of the calculations of the experts. A team that just now, for instance, looks like a sure pennant winner might easily be put out of the running by the illness or other incapacity of one or two of its leading pitchers.

In sizing up the four leading teams in the National league I find that the New York Giants are strongest. The Cubs are weak without the services of their two great stars, Evers and Catcher Kling. Another thing is that this great baseball machine is not running as smoothly as it did two years ago. Whether the Pittsburgs are stronger than in 1908 will depend largely on the ability of Abstein to play first base. The Phillies have not been improved to any great extent. Still I look to see them put up a great fight.

If the Giants do not capture the National league pennant this season, it will be the fault of luck. Johnny McGraw has unquestionably the best team that ever represented New York city. To specify the points of strength is difficult, as there is no apparent weakness in the team.

The pitching staff is the strongest that ever represented the Giants in the league. Take a look at these and see for yourself. Of the right handers there are Christy Mathewson, Leon Ames, "Bugs" Raymond and Otis Crandall. The left handers are George Wiltse, "Rube" Marquard and Jake Weimer. Is there a club in the country that can beat it? Mathewson is due for another good season. Wiltse is stronger than he was last season and won't have to work out of his turn this season, as he did last, as the team is equipped with two other south paws—Weimer and "Rube" Marquard. The former pitched good ball for Cincinnati and with a steady infield and outfield to back him up Weimer will make a better record. "Rube" has still to deliver the goods, but McGraw would not have paid $11,000 for Marquard without being pretty certain that he was worth the coin. Crandall, with a year's experience, will make a good record. Of "Bugs" Raymond great things are expected. "Bugs'" work for St. Louis last season was ofttimes sensational. There has been considerable talk of Raymond, like "Rube" Waddell, being a hard man to handle. This may be so, but Raymond is now playing under a manager who is used to being obeyed, and "Bugs" knows this. An excellent illustration of how McGraw can whip his men into line and make them remain on their feet is the case of Mike Donlin. Since Donlin came to New York he learned how to obey orders, and that is why he batted himself into second place among the sluggers last season. And McGraw will do the same with Raymond. Indeed, he has Raymond thoroughly tamed now. Raymond is a great pitcher when he settles down to his work. He has no equal when it comes to using the elusive spit ball.

Last season McGraw neither had a reliable pitching staff nor a trustworthy set of outfielders. The one consistent among the delivery clerks was Christopher Mathewson, who never had a bad spell. George Wiltse went finely until September and then broke down. Otis Crandall was a spring sensation and a fall disappointment. The Fowler (Ind.) boy had hard luck in many of his combats. Luther Taylor and Joe McGinnity couldn't beat the top notch teams and often needed aid from Royal Rescuer Mathewson to subdue the clubs which finished in the second division.

It was thought that with the absence of Roger Bresnahan the catching department would be weakened, but shrewd Johnny McGraw knew what he was doing when he made the trade last winter. He has an excellent catcher in Schlei, whom he secured from Cincinnati. In addition, he has picked up a wonder in Myers, the Indian. The latter will probably prove a harder hitter than Bresnahan. He picks out good balls and is consequently no pot hitter. He knows what he is doing at all times. Then he has Wilson and Snodgrass, either of whom is as good as some best catchers on other clubs.

Myers' real name leaked out recently. The big Indian had kept it a secret ever since he went into professional baseball. It seems that a newspaper man in Richmond, Va., went to school with the big chief at Dartmouth and told some of the players the name under which Myers matriculated. When the chief woke up somebody surprised him by calling him "Chief Tortes." The Indian smiled and said: "Well, I guess you fellows have got me with the goods. That is my real name."

Myers is descended from an old line of Indian aristocracy and did not desire to have his real name known in baseball. He is a great-grandson of the famous chief of the Cuchilla tribe of Mission Indians of California. The fighting ancestor was named Quaqua, and Tortes, or Jack Myers, his grandson, is very proud of the royal blood in his veins.

It would be hard to find a better outfield in the older organization than that of the Giants. Every one will come close to hitting .300, and each one is lightning fast on the bases. Herzog, who held down Doyle's place at second during the latter's absence last fall, has the makings of a splendid outfielder. He is not as graceful as the other two, O'Hara and Murray, but he is as fast as a jack rabbit in covering ground and always delivers the goods. His lack of grace in covering the position is due to the fact that he has always played the infield.

O'Hara in center is one of those easy going outfielders who apparently know where the ball is going to fall and are always under it without any undue effort. He takes long drives so easy that they do not look difficult. Murray is the same kind of a fielder as O'Hara. He never appears to exert himself.

Securing Murray is one of the greatest of McGraw's many clever trades.

McGraw has his team well drilled in all the fine points of baseball. It works its base running plays as smooth as a clock, and the infield works as smoothly and harmoniously as it did last year. Larry Doyle at second has improved his style to a great extent. Constant association with other men who are old and expert in the business has done him a great deal of good, and he will be one of the real stars this year. McGraw had his team devote considerable time each day during the training season to base running, and his instructions will bear fruit as the season progresses.

The shrewdness of the Giants' manager can be seen in the manner in which he has sought to build up his team where it was weak last year. He was not blind to the shortcomings of any of his players, and he realized that if he could have "stretched out" a little more now and then on the bases he would have captured some of those contests which he missed by a single run.

The little turns and quickness in taking advantage of opportune moments for which McGraw is famous were never so much in evidence as they are this season. The long leads from bases to worry the pitcher, the well timed recovery and the co-operation between batter and runner are more marked than last year. All this means attractive baseball. What it may mean relative to the championship must be decided later.

Speed is the keynote of the whole organization. On the field it is in evidence in the agility of the players. On the bases it is more in evidence by their nimbleness and daring. At bat it is a striking characteristic because one may see that every play has a motive behind it. The nine of 1908 was a great power, so far as speed was concerned, in spots, but the team of this year collectively is much faster.

The American League.

Of the four leading clubs—Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis—in the American league, which are again expected to land in the first division, I prefer Cleveland's chances. In sizing up the leading teams last season I find that the Naps have been strengthened the most. Chicago without its great leader, Fielder Jones, is weak. St. Louis is due for a great slump, as the men are going, not coming, and Detroit has not been strengthened to any great extent. The Tigers have not improved its pitching staff unless Jones and La Fitte show remarkable form for recruits. To counteract any great winning prowess that any one of these three may display it looks now as if Detroit would be forced to go along without a really serviceable left hander, Killian being troubled with a lame arm. He hopes to get into shape again, but it is a toss up as to whether or not he will be successful.

Cleveland, however, has strengthened its team in the pitching department by the addition of Cy Young, than whom there are few better, if any, in the business. The question has been raised that without Criger he will not be of much use. Clevelanders, however, have great faith in the ability of Bemis and Clarke to catch the famous veteran and cause him to have just as successful a season as if his old side partner were behind the bat. Then Pitchers Wright and Sitton of the recruits appear to have just as much class as either of the two Detroit youngsters named.

Behind the bat Cleveland is more formidable than Detroit. By the time the season is well on Cleveland will have Clarke and Bemis to offset Charley Schmidt, and there is no doubt of Clarke being superior to Schmidt. As for Land and Easterly, the Cleveland recruits are better batters than Beckendorf and Stanage and probably just as good receivers. Then Cleveland has Jim McGuire to use in a pinch, and the veteran is far from being all in despite his age.

Cleveland has the classier infield both in fielding and batting. Stovall is a more valuable man than Rossman. Lajoie has it all over Schaefer, and Moriarity is scarcely in Bradley's class as a third sacker, although he may outbat the Clevelander a trifle. As for the men who will play short for the rival teams, Cleveland will have the better of it should Turner be able to resume his position and stay in the game. If Perring is the man, it should be a standoff. Bush played a sensational game at the bat, on the bases and in the field for the Tigers last fall, but whether or not he can keep up the pace this season remains to be seen. If he should succeed in so doing he will have something on the Cleveland utility infielder.

There is no question of Detroit outclassing Cleveland in the outfield, but with Flick back into the game the Naps' garden will compare well with any of its rivals outside of Detroit.

TOMMY CLARK.

DRAMATIC NOTES.

Fritz Williams is playing in the title role of "Mr. Crewe's Career."

Miss Annie Russell is to make a tour of the south in "The Stronger Sex."

LEFT HANDED CATCHERS GONE

"Jiggs" Donahue and Fred Tenney Broke In as South Paw Receivers.

Left handed catchers seem to have gone out of style completely. About the only one who ever did amount to much as a backstop was Jack Clements, who did great work for the Phillies a dozen years ago. He took on so much weight, however, that Philadelphia let him go to St. Louis, and he finished his baseball career, as did Jack Stivetts, as a member of the ill fated Misfits in Cleveland in 1899.

Jack gave up the job in disgust along in June and returned to his home in Philadelphia, preferring to quit altogether rather than play with a club whose winning streak was always confined to one consecutive game.

Fred Tenney was considered a wonderful catcher when at Brown university. He broke into the big league as a catcher, going from Brown to Boston as the receiving end of the battery of Sexton and Tenney. He failed to distinguish himself as a catcher, though, and was called upon to play first base one day when the regular first sacker was hurt. He made good at once and has been playing first ever since.

"Jiggs" Donahue is another who fell down as a catcher, but has acquired fame as a wonderful fielding first baseman. Bill Armour had him catching for his Dayton team. Then McAleer gave him a trial at St. Louis in 1902. He was a dismal failure and was dropped to Milwaukee. Cantillion despaired of his showing anything behind the plate and stuck him on first base. At first he looked like a bloomer, but he finally acquired confidence and became a star in that position.

A TEAM OF CASTOFFS.

Enough Star Ball Players Let Out to Make a Good Nine.

Enough players have passed out of the major leagues during the off season to form a team, and one that would be able to make a fairly good showing. Most of the players were stars during their days, and seven have taken part in world's series. Here's the team:

Catchers—Sid Smith, Schreck and Needham.

Pitchers — McGinnity, Taylor, Flaherty and Hogg.

First base—McGann.

Second base—McCourtney.

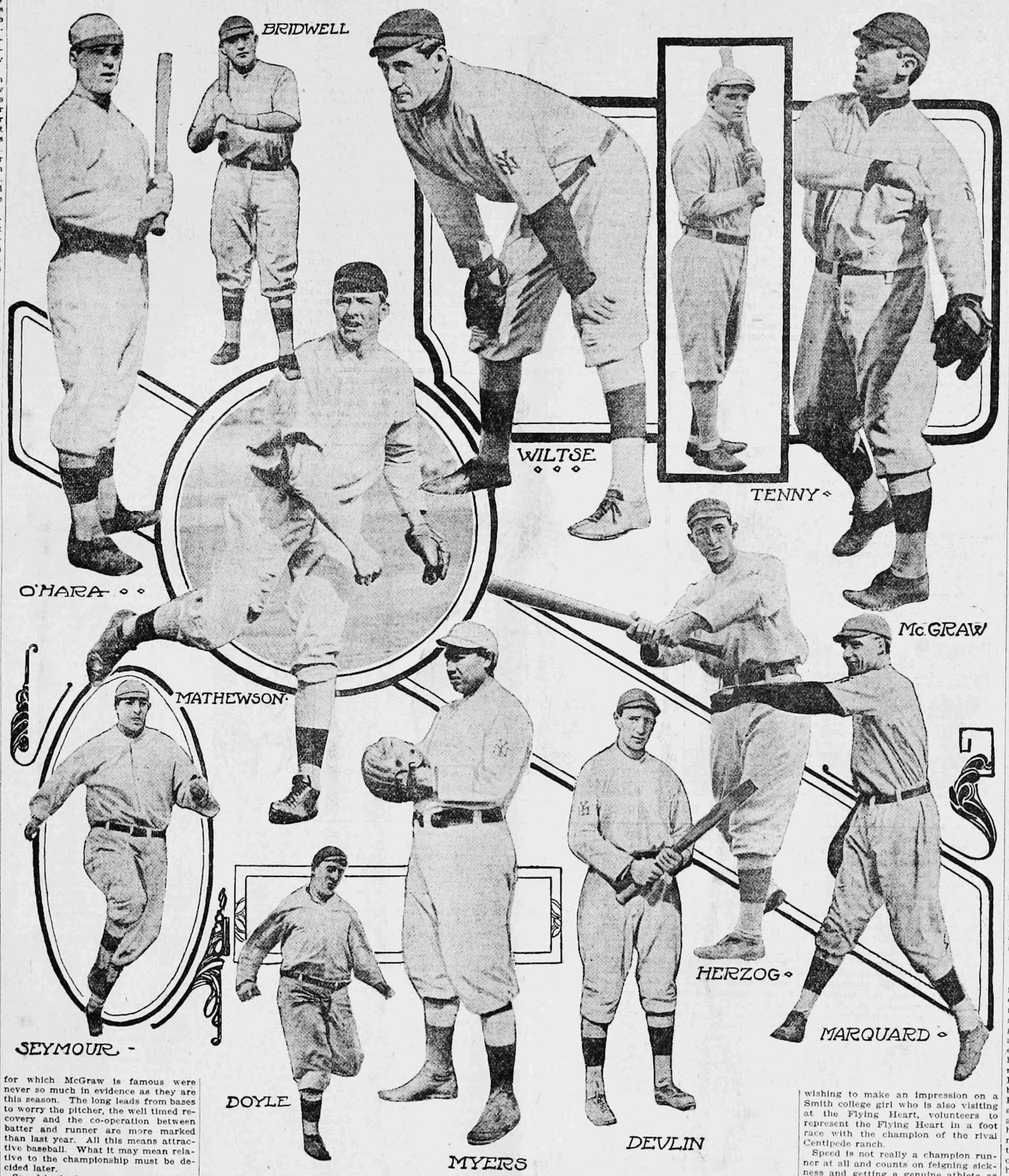
Third base—Collins.

Shortstop—Yeager.

Outfielders—Shannon, Seybold and Pickering.

Utility infielders — Hostetter and Coughlin.

Utility outfielder—Barry.



Latest Action Photos of Some of Johnny McGraw's New York Giants

Locke Play, "The Climax," Is "Melody Drama." "Going Some" Marks David Belasco's Debut Into Slang.---An Outdoor Comedy

[From Our New York Dramatic Correspondent.]

AT last something new in the way of a description of a stage production has been discovered. The progenitors of the new production at Weber's theater, "The Climax," have stated that it is a "melody drama" and leave it to the public to decide just what a melody drama is.

No longer are the stereotyped forms of description of stage products good enough for the down to date managers, and it will probably be a very short time before somebody else goes the backers of "The Climax" one better and promulgates what posterity will hear spoken of as an "oratorioistic melodrama" or a "smyphoniously comic tragedy." In the language of the chronic poker player before the draw, "Who knows?"

Properly speaking, "The Climax" is a drama, with incidental music, arranged by Joseph Carl Breil. The entire action of the play takes place in the apartments of Luigi Golfanti, a teacher of vocal music, with a glimpse of his studio adjoining, in which his son Pietro helps to eke out their precarious livelihood by giving music lessons.

Adelina, a pupil who is a distant relative of the Golfantis and who is thought by them to possess a voice of much promise and who aspires to renown as an operatic artist, has taken up her abode with the Golfantis. John Raymond, a doctor, and Pietro are madly in love with Adelina. She, however, devoted to her art, spurns their attentions, and Dr. Raymond ventures to presume that his lovemaking would progress much better were it not for her voice.

The Age of Ideal Smashing.

The age of the demolition of ideals has long been with us, but sometimes we forget that fact. A gentle reminder comes to us, however, in the shape of a new drama at the Belasco theater that has a shocking, a slangy title. Think of the wanton desecration of that temple of hyper-developed art, the Belasco theater, from which has streamed to the heavens the pillar of flame of dramatic genius that could be ignited only by Mrs. Leslie Carter! How Mrs. Carter must writhe and cry out as at a distance she hears that a play with the title of "Going Some" has been produced on those classic boards that once splintered under the foot poundings of Zaza and the illustrious Du Barry!

Languish though she may, "Going Some" has arrived. Paul Armstrong and Rex E. Beach wrote the play, a comedy, produced by the Shuberts.

Outline of the Play.

The new comedy is an "outdoor" play with the winning of a foot race—a hundred yard dash—as the central factor in the plot. It is described as a "comedy concerning cowboys and college men" and is said to be the first piece in which these contrasting elements have been humorously commingled. The four acts of the play take place at the Flying Heart ranch, New Mexico; in the interior of the bunk house at the ranch, at the ranch again and at the corral of the Centipede ranch. The action takes place between Monday and Saturday of one week.

According to the story of the comedy, a "rah-rah" boy from Yale of the name of Speed, whose athletic achievements have actually been limited to leading the cheering on the side lines, is visiting the Flying Heart ranch with his coach in search of diversion. Speed, wishing to make an impression on a Smith college girl who is also visiting at the Flying Heart, volunteers to represent the Flying Heart in a foot race with the champion of the rival Centipede ranch.

Speed is not really a champion runner at all and counts on feigning sickness and getting a genuine athlete as substitute, but when the genuine runner finally appears he is on crutches! The manner in which Speed, terror stricken by the threats of the cowboys to shoot him if he loses the race, manages to bluff out the situation and comes off with flying colors furnishes the climax of the comedy.

The leading members of the company are Lawrence Wheat, Walter Jones, George Leach, Oza Waldorp, Muriel Starr, Laura Lemmers, Thomas J. Karrigan, Herbert Cothell, George K. Henery, Escamillo Fernandez, Augustus Glassmeir, Hugh Cameron, Charles West, William Harrigan and W. Tammany Young.

Galsworthy's London Success.

It begins to look as if John Galsworthy was going to have an important chapter to himself when the stage history of the present day in London comes to be written. His first play, "The Silver Box," produced at the Court theater, was one of the notable achievements of the Granville-Barker regime, although it was a depressing work and not exactly popular. The second, "Joy," was too complex, its psychology too intricate, its intentions too subtle, for present stage use. Perhaps it was ahead of English time and nearer to German requirements.

The third, "Strife," which has been put on for a trial series of matinees, gives definite evidence that Galsworthy is a dramatist worth more than local attention and that "The Silver Box" was not merely a lucky fluke.

Evidently the tip had gone forth that the occasion would be interesting, for all the available "intellectuals" were present at the opening, from Bernard Shaw to Beerbohm Tree, and, among Americans, from Winthrop Ames, manager of the New theater in New York, to Chester Bailey Fernad of "Cat and Cherub" fame.

The play deals with a struggle between the board of directors of a tin mine and their workmen, who have been on strike until they are starving, but there is no physical violence. It is a conflict of ideas and forces and not of persons and consequently is disappointing to those who want the limelight focused on stars. In the circumstances it speaks well for Charles Frohman that he had the courage and good will to produce it. My guess is that he never would have done it if J. M. Barrie had not insisted on it.

Frederick Trevelles

WHEN BARRIE STARTED TO TALK.

J. M. Barrie, the famous Scotch playwright and novelist, has the reputation of being remarkably reticent even for a Scot. It is not an unusual thing for him to sit for an hour or more with his friends either in their homes or his own without uttering half a dozen words. But when he does talk—

The story goes that not long after he first went to London to become a journalist he was admitted to a coterie of choice spirits whose habit it was to meet periodically for a pipe and a bowl and conversation. Barrie always attended the meetings and joined in the pipe and the bowl—especially the pipe, for he is an inveterate smoker—but he never contributed to the conversation. At last his silence became noticeable, and his companions began to think him unfriendly and morose. Finally one of those who knew him best advised him if he wished to remain in the coterie to join sometimes at least in the discussions.

Barrie said nothing at the time. The next meeting night came around, and he was in his place, as usual. Some topic was proposed for discussion, and very soon the company was surprised to hear a remark from the hitherto silent Scot. And evidently it was more than a mere remark, for Barrie went right on talking as if he had never done anything else and never intended to do anything else but talk. After awhile he got tired talking sitting down, and he got up and walked around the room, always talking.

Some of the others tried to break in, but Barrie had the floor, and he would yield it to no one. It was as if he had been storing up words all his life and the dam had suddenly burst.

A PLAY WITHOUT A MANUSCRIPT.

Charles Frohman has fixed upon the latter part of April as the date for the London appearance of William Collier in "The Patriot." Mr. Collier and nearly all of the American company are in London ready to appear in the witty little three act farce written by the comedian in collaboration with Hartley Manners without changing an "if," "and" or "but" of the manuscript in deference to British sensibility or understanding.

Mr. Frohman's unexpectedly sudden decision to jump Mr. Collier from New York to London at one move as neatly as one moves a pawn on a chessboard has brought out the surprising fact that "The Patriot" has been running all season in New York without ever being put into manuscript form. Mr. Frohman cabled Mr. Collier asking for the manuscript "by the next boat," and the comedian had to reply: "There never has been a manuscript. Will write it on the way over."

The fact is that Mr. Collier and Mr. Manners in the beginning talked over the plot of "The Patriot" and agreed upon a certain line of action. Mr. Manners sketched some scenes, which Mr. Collier speedily filled in with dialogue written on the backs of envelopes, old letters and wrapping paper. The rest of the play was made in the process of rehearsal, Mr. Collier, as stage director, saying to an actor, "When I say so and so, you say such and such." Perhaps that accounts for the remarkable naturalness and likeliness of everything that is said in "The Patriot," although it is called a farce. At any rate, it is probably the only play that ever ran an entire season in New York without a manuscript.

THE KING'S DRAMATIC CRITIC.

The theaters have a great attraction for the Princess of Wales, and she was once referred to by the king as "our musical and dramatic critic." When she is in London and her other engagements permit she almost invariably attends a theater in the evening, either with only a lady in waiting with her or with one or more of the younger members of the royal family, such as Prince Arthur of Connaught or her brother and sister-in-law, Prince and Princess Alexander of Teck. She is an inveterate first nighter, and theatrical managers in London when they have a production of more than ordinary importance have become accustomed to make inquiries at Marlborough House to see whether her royal highness proposes to occupy the royal box or not. It is largely upon her report that other members of the royal family decide whether to visit a certain play or not, and particularly is this the case with the king and queen.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, BY FROHMAN.

I would as lief think of accusing a dramatic critic of personal bias in his reviews of plays and players as of accusing a bank clerk of dishonesty, since the second would be no more treacherous to his employers than the first. Personalities never can be entirely absent from dramatic criticism so long as the public prefer to read about persons than about things, but personalism, delving into an actor's character or disposition as a man, apart from his work on the stage, is unfair and generally makes dull reading.

JEM DRISCOLL LIKES AMERICA.

With the admission that in his five months' tour in America he earned $20,000 and got back home with $10,000 of the money, Jem Driscoll, the English featherweight champion boxer, in an interview on his return to England in the London Sporting Life makes the unqualified statement that he found America much to his liking and had strong inclinations of returning before long.